

# News Release

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## *Common Ground* to Put Focus on Education in South Carolina, 2020 and Beyond

*S.C. Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to Convene Long-Range Planning Group to  
Explore Critical Actions for Future Educational Success*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Copies of concept papers and a list of Common Ground participants can be  
found on the EOC's website, [www.sceoc.org](http://www.sceoc.org).*

**CLEMSON, S.C.** – Fifty-two South Carolinians, representing a cross-section of the state and a diverse group of organizations and agencies, will come together Sunday and Monday in a long-range planning session known as *Common Ground*. The two-day session, hosted by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) at Clemson University's Madren Conference Center, is focused on defining priorities and critical actions so that, in 2020 and beyond, South Carolina is known for its educational successes more than for its challenges.

The group includes representation from the following: State Superintendent of Education, State Board of Education, General Assembly, EOC, Governor's Education Reform Council, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, Palmetto Business Forum, Palmetto Institute, Council on Competitiveness, presidents from higher education institutions, higher education trustees, the education associations, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and others.

"The *Common Ground* effort acknowledges that, despite differences in strategies or philosophies, each of us is committed to a South Carolina in which every young person can achieve his or her potential," states Bob Staton, Chairman of the EOC. "This is truly a unique opportunity for critical dialogue and for the leadership of South Carolina to respond proactively," Staton states.

Concept papers were commissioned by the EOC on six topics. These papers will provide the basis for discussion at *Common Ground*. Key points of the papers include:

- An examination of a 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge society -- learners, learning experiences and learning communities of 2020, when the babies of today will be in high school.
- A thorough look at school governance options -- can schools be governed so that they maintain their communities of interest while supporting dynamic impact with fiscal efficiency?
- An overview of P-16 education reform, looking at educating students through a seamless education pipeline.
- An examination of ways South Carolina can ensure a professional education workforce in classrooms.
- A look at the facilities that house our education system – will the schoolhouse disappear and be replaced by a virtual classroom?
- An examination of communities, families, and schools and how they form a foundation for success in school.

A highlight of the conference is a presentation by Dr. David J. Cowen, of the University of South Carolina Department of Geography. Cowen will present geographic displays of demographic and economic data in South Carolina. Some of the trends Cowen points to are:

- South Carolina will have a 28 percent increase in population between 2000 and 2030.
- The proportion of South Carolina's population 65 and older will increase from twelve percent to 22 percent in 30 years.
- Service sector will make up 40 percent of South Carolina's employment in 2010.

The *Common Ground* group is expected to define priorities and critical actions based on data presentations and discussions. Smaller groups will reconvene at the end of the year to discuss plans for moving forward.

"South Carolina *can* lead the nation in educational progress," states Dr. Jo Anne Anderson, EOC Executive Director. "Reaching the top starts with setting long-range goals and deliberately working toward achieving those goals. *Common Ground* will set the framework by establishing a 'blueprint' from which to work," Anderson states.

*The EOC is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected officials who are appointed by the legislature and governor to monitor and review the implementation of the 1998 South Carolina Education Accountability Act, the Education Improvement Act, and the K-12 system.*

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